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ABSTRACT

This paper offers a review of methods of judging the quality of English compositions and demonstrates the need for establishing criteria to judge composition work in a developmental context. Scales of development designed to meet that need are categorized as: stylistic measures that include structure/organization, syntax, verbal competence, reader awareness, cohesion, appropriateness, and effectiveness; affective measures that include an awareness of self, others, the environment, the addressee, and reality; cognitive measures that include the ability to describe, interpret, generalize, and speculate; and moral measures that include judging self/others by physical characteristics, punishments and rewards, status/power, conventional norms/rules, intention/motive, abstract universal concepts, and a personally developed value system. The results of giving the same four written tasks (an autobiographical narrative, an account of a process written from authority, a fictional story, and a discussion/persuasion paper) to 90 students aged 7, 10, and 13 and of applying the scales of development to samples of their writing are discussed. (AEA)

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ASSESSING LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

THE CREDITON PROJECT *

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A PROBLEM OF DEFINITION

The title of John Dixon's book Growth Through English represents a view of English teaching which nowadays many would subscribe to. English teachers have always felt a special responsibility for the personal development of their students, and the literature abounds with terms like 'growth', 'fruition', 'development', 'maturity'. These terms however are notoriously ill-defined. And there are clearly differences between the language of (say) a one year old, a five year old, and a ten year old. Development obviously takes place, but does not take place obviously.

With a view to obtaining a clearer picture of the language features of pupils at particular ages, post-graduate studies at the Language in Education Centre have been going ahead over the last three years. Currently a research team (Barnsley, Hanna, Swan) is devising scales of development beyond those tentatively outlined by Wilkinson and Wilkinson (1978) and Wilkinson (1978). The project at this stage is confined to written composition.

SOME SCHEMES OF ASSESSMENT

Traditionally, judgements on English compositions have been made under headings. Particularly on marking examination papers headings of the type Language, Style, Content and Mechanical Accuracy (principally spelling and punctuation) have been used. A fair amount of investigation into the reliability of examiners using the type of 'code' marking took place (Hartog and Rhodes, 1936, being the classic) until Wiseman's work (1949) showed that 'impression marking' was just as reliable, faster and probably more valid. The impression markers were doubtless using internalised criteria derived from

their experience; probably many of the code markers were doing this also and finding in the code system a simplified rationale for these.

What such criteria are however has not really been pursued, though there have been attempts to look beyond the conventional headings. In Assessing Compositions (1965) a team of LATE (the London Association for the Teaching of English) suggested five aspects of writing for consideration (in relation to imaginative composition) : realisation, comprehension, organisation, density of information, relation of spoken to the written language. The group of teachers of Somerset L.E.A. organised to produce Language Development Guidelines, (Jones, 1973) suggested the following 'attributes of written composition' - originality, vocabulary, elaboration, organisation, syntactic arrangement, spelling, hand-writing and layout.

Interestingly the headings for markers suggested by the Assessment of Performance Unit (which is attempting a national 'light sampling' in the U.K.) are strictly orthodox - orthographic conventions, grammatical conventions, style, structure content. Each is to be rated on a three point scale. The order in which the headings are given and the equal loading of each seems to give an emphasis to the formal aspects of composition which has often been absent in recent years. Indeed any assessment system which operates across the board without knowledge of individual children will tend to operate on a 'skills model'.

Whilst useful for their particular purposes it is clear that none of these schemes are delicate enough to investigate developmental features in the detail we are interested in. To this end we have constructed the scales of development outlined below. But these are not designed as short-cut assessment instruments. They are intended to reveal unfamiliar aspects of written work, or at least some aspects which may have escaped conscious notice (though an impression mark may take them into account). They are scales of style, affect, cognition and morals. 'Language' seems an obvious omission but this is deliberate. So much work has been done in this area that it will be discussed briefly in the next section, and then left on one side.

TRADITIONAL LINGUISTIC MEASURES

It is very late in the day to investigate development in purely linguistic terms, if by 'linguistic' we mean the objective 'count' measures which have been used, particularly by psychologists, over the past fifty years. These include quantity (the number of words, the mean sentence length). They include variety (the number of different words, the variety of parts of speech - adjectives and adverbs appearing to indicate greater maturity than nouns and verbs). These last two measures are of course calculated in relation to the total words used. Obviously there is much more likelihood of variety in ten sentences than in two. Thus what is called the type-token ratio is calculated - the number of words under study (e.g. adjectives) being expressed as a ratio of the total number of words. Again the use of unusual words has been regarded as significant (for instance words not occurring in basic vocabulary lists such as Thorndike's (1944), as has also the variety of sentences used (question, statement, exclamation, etc.). Often the occurrence of basic sentence patterns, or 't units', sometimes modified by considering them as 'phonological' or 'communication' units, has been employed. The degree of sentence complexity, counting subordinate phrases and clauses, has been widely employed as a measure. Thus Loban (1963) used a 'weighed index of subordination' giving one point for each dependent clause, and a similar type of weighing for other subordinate features. There have also been analyses using transformational and systemic grammar. Coherence and completeness have also been included.

A study by Harpin et al. (1973) will serve as an example of the types of analysis which might be used. This study, concerned with writing development in the junior school, used the following measures : sentence length, clause length, subordination index, Loban subordination scale, use of simple sentences, use of complex sentences, use of 'uncommon' subordinate clauses (all except adverbial clauses of time and noun clause objects), the incidence of non-finite constructions in the main clause, general index of personal pronoun use, the proportion of first person and of third person uses, the proportion of personal pronoun uses other than as subject.

If we may generalise from the results of numerous studies (for summaries of the research see, e.g. McCarthy, 1954; Carroll, 1968) it seems that in pre-school children language maturity is marked by greater number of words, greater mean sentence length, greater variety of words and parts of speech, greater use of unusual words, use of varied sentence types, greater complexity of structure, and superior coherence. However, we have to be cautious in considering these findings. Early researchers do not seem to have been sufficiently aware of the importance for its linguistic content of the situation in which the language was produced. Harpin et al. (1973) with junior school children find that their results agree with those of other research workers (p. 132) on the importance only of sentence length, clause length, and to a less extent on index of subordination. They point out that the most important source of variability in all measures is the kind of writing required.

'Count' measures as so used are very crude indicaters of surface structure, and do not take into account meaning, though they obviously have had usefulness in for instance diagnostic and clinical situations. Other more important processes are going on than those merely of increase. The same vocabulary and structures are growing more meanings as the frame of reference of the child is enhanced. An awareness of style and an advance in analytical ability may in fact decrease the variety of words and structures used on a particular occasion.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF SCALES OF DEVELOPMENT

There has been no previous work on the construction of scales of development in the areas of style, affect, cognition and morals of the kind which the present research is undertaking. Britton's scale of transactional development for instance requires a single global judgement to be made of each piece of writing. The scales we are devising enable one to make an analysis of details of written work from four different standpoints. Thus they are basically research instruments, but by attempting to lay bare the bases of judgement, it is hoped that they can bring about a greater awareness of the criteria by which readers do, or could judge composition work in a developmental context. It is for later work to simplify

them for classroom use if that is the way they need to be used.

There follows a general description of each scale. Under each heading in the final report the items in the scales will be listed in hierarchal order, and each item coded, but for the purposes of this article that has been felt unnecessary. Instead, in a later section their operation on certain selected pieces of written work will be demonstrated.

STYLISTIC MEASURES

Judgements are often made about the 'style' of childrens written work. There is a difficulty of definition. Crystal and Davy (1969, pp. 9-10) distinguish four commonly occurring senses of 'style' - the language habits of a person, or of a group of people, the effectiveness of a mode of expression, and the idea of style as 'good' writing. The first two may be described largely objectively; the second two are partly evaluative. For our purposes we may perhaps equate the first two with the use of the appropriate register - the employment of a certain variety of language for a particular purpose in a particular situation. This is a feature which linguistics has sharpened up for us. The second two are derived from literary criticism, and assume a standard of 'good' or 'fine', or on the other hand of 'effective' writing - these are the ones which most often occur in teachers' judgements.

The first two definitions of style imply specific language for specific purposes, and thus no single concept of a good style. However it is possible to specify certain stylistic universals - features which all styles must have in common, just as they must have language in common. These would seem to be :

Structure/organisation. Concerned with the relationship of the separate elements to the whole organisation. Development will be seen in terms of movement from perception of individual units to perception of the totality which they constitute.

Syntax. There will be a development from simple to complex, but the furthest point of development will lie in the control of the appropriate structures in relation to the semantic needs.

Verbal competence. There will be in general a movement from limited concrete vocabulary, perhaps with imprecise and general meaning, to a vocabulary which has greater precision, and uses abstraction and elaborates where necessary.

Reader awareness. The degree to which the writer can put himself in the place of the reader. Initially concerned with decentring, this category includes such aspects as the writers 'orientation'
the degree of elaboration and explanation to give the necessary context and understanding.

Cohesion. Cohesive devices are employed to maintain continuity between the part of the text and another. Just as grammar establishes the structural relativity within clause or sentence so cohesion establishes the semantic relationship within the text. The range of cohesive devices is set out in Halliday and Hassan (1976).

Appropriateness. Development is seen in terms of the writer's ability to adapt to the accepted style of discourse. Young children often write in oral modes, or mix spoken and written. At the other end of the scale a writer may well frustrate the readers expectation for deliberate effect by breaking register.

Effectiveness. This universal concerns the success of the writing in communicating. In this sense it is the summation of the others. It is partly what Pope had in mind when he wrote 'In every work regard the writer's end' (Essay in Criticism, l.255), but we must beware of the intentionalist fallacy, that the quality of work is necessarily what the writer intended to make it.

There can of course be no single criterion of effectiveness. In a narrative it may be the interest and suspense sustained, in an autobiography the realisation of the writer's feelings and motives, in a set of instructions the success of the reader in installing the wall bracket, and so on.

AFFECTIVE MEASURES

Nowhere is the concept of growth more difficult to define than in the area of the emotions. It is commonly assumed that one is helping children towards maturity through language, but this never seems to be defined, certainly not in Holbrook's book 'English for Maturity' (1961). A parallel article in present issue of Language for Learning by Harrison seems to go further in clarification than others have done.

For our purposes we see development in the affective mode as lying in three movements - one towards a greater awareness of self, another towards a greater awareness of others, and of their place in the environment, and a third towards an acceptance of reality and of imagination.

Self. Self expresses own emotions, becomes aware of these emotions, and evaluates them, recognises their springs and complexities, becomes aware of motives behind apparent motives. Self becomes aware of self-image, and of how one appears to others.

Others. The awareness of others as distinct identities. To young children others appear as servicing agencies. There is a process apparent in some writing of others manifesting themselves as individuals, in terms of what they say and do and how this expresses what they think and feel. Degree of empathy displayed by the writer towards others.

Environment. An awareness of physical surroundings. These may not be noticed. They may be assumed as in a 'restricted code' situation. They may be responded to. They may be interrelated with the characteristics

of self or other people.

Addressee. It is often argued that the writing to an unknown or not-envisaged addressee will be poor in quality since it lacks focus. Certainly the imaginative leap into the mind of another so that one grasps what terms have meaning for him is a kind of empathy which must characterise effective communication.

Reality. Basically this is concerned with how far a distinction is recognised between the world of phenomena and the world of fantasy, and the world of imagination, between magical and logical thinking; with how far the writer's own beliefs can come to an accommodation with external reality; with how far the literal-metaphorical aspects of experience can be processed in complexity.

COGNITIVE MEASURES

Cognitive development has received more attention than affective development. Piaget's stages - sensorimotor, preoperational, and operational (concrete and formal) - are seminal in the field. Bruner suggests a movement from the enactive, via the iconic to the symbolic. All models offered agree on a movement from an undifferentiated world to a world organised by the mind, from a world full of instances to a world related by generalities and abstractions. The hierarchy of Bloom's cognitive domain (1956) from knowledge of specifics to synthesis and evaluation follows this progress in some detail.

Even so there have been few attempts to evaluate the cognitive aspects of writing, though Peel et al. (1971) have assessed the cognitive judgements made by pupils of writing in terms of describer and explainer thinking. Moffett's (1968) comes nearer to the line we are pursuing when he classifies discourse into four categories :

what is happening - drama - recording

what happened - narrative - reporting

what happens - exposition - generalising

what may happen - logical argumentation - theorising (p. 35)

He sees this in some relationship to Bernstein's codes :

> The code differences run along the same line as the developmental shifts we have discussed; implicit; ethnocentric to individualistic, increasing choice, increasing consciousness of abstracting (speech being an object of special perceptual activity), increasing elaboration (p. 58).

Drawing on and developing Moffett's categories, Britton (1971) in turn erects a hierarchy of 'transactional' categories from recording at the bottom (writing 'what is going on here and now') to the tautologic at the top ('the systematic combining of abstract propositions leads to new conclusions').

The model used in the present study is as follows :

Describing. There is a move from labelling and naming, via simple statements and incomplete information, to reporting of a complete sequence.

Interpreting. The development is from a simple explanation, or inference or assessment to a deduction drawing on a series of (e.g. causal) links.

Generalising. The baseline would be a generalised concrete statement, moving to a summation of a whole section, and thence to the generalisations implied by a classificatory system.

Speculating. The movement here is from inadequate to adequate simple hypothesis at the statement level, via exploring and project at the discourse level, to controlled and extended theorising.

MORAL MEASURES

Although there is some disagreement between psychologists as to the number of stages a child passes through as he comes to internalise the morality of his culture, there is a general agreement that in early childhood 'anomy' or lawlessness gives way to 'heteronomy' or rule by fear of punishment, which in turn gives way to 'socionomy' or rule by a sense of reciprocity with others //

which finally leads to the emergence of 'autonomy' or self-rule. Kolberg's three phases, preconventional, conventional and post conventional are elaborations of heteronomy-autonomy; Piaget (1932) emphasised socionomy replacing heteronomy at the end of the concrete operational period; Bull (1969) emphasises the importance of all four, pointing out that even in adulthood evidence of earlier stages is apparent in all our thinking. The developmental model we are proposing is a cumulative stage model, not a discrete stage model in which earlier forms of moral judgement are totally superceded by more mature ones.

Judging, or naming, of self and others by physical characteristics, as though they carried moral force or by the physical consequences of actions.

Judging self/others in terms of punishments and rewards as the motive for action ('heteronomy').

Judging self/others according to status and power. Policeman good by status; witch bad by convention. Stereotypical thinking.

Judging self/others in terms of conventional norms/rules. Conformist orientation.

Judging self/others in terms of intention or motive regardless of status, power or results of actions.

Judging self/others in terms of abstract universal concepts rather than conventional or cultural norms.

Judgement in terms of a coherent personally developed value system.

THE PROJECT DESIGN

The design of the project was to give the same four written tasks to children of seven, ten and thirteen. Three classes of pupils with about 30 pupils in each were chosen with the aid of the teachers. They were from a primary and lower secondary school in a market town in Devon, U.K. and both the choice of schools and the guidance of the teachers suggested that these groups were fairly homogeneous in terms of background and ability. Keeping the four tasks common across the age groups is necessary if one is to go further than the two Schools Council projects, and actually begin to answer the question; what are the features of writing development at different ages?

The tasks were :

1. Autobiographical narrative. 'The happiest/saddest day of my life' or (for 13 year olds) 'The best/worst experience I have ever had'. The audience posited is teacher as trusted adult. The function expressive-poetic. The content - the writer's choice on the principle of one may selectivity.
2. An account of a process written from authority. How to play (a particular game or sport). The audience posited is a layman, someone who wishes to learn the game. The function, expressive-transactional. The content - a game which the writer can play and thus may be able to explain.
3. A fictional story. The writer selects one of three photographs with the instruction 'Write a story for which your picture is one of the illustrations'. Function, expressive/poetic. The appeal is to a wider public. The writer begins with a picture containing two people in a dramatic situation.
4. Discussion/persuasion. 'Would it work if children came to school when they liked, and could do what they liked there?' The audience - peer group. Function, expressive/transactional. Pupils'own thinking stimulated by class discussion.

It can be seen from the tasks that they represent an attempt to vary audience and function; that two call for writing in role of the spectator, and two in the role of participant in the world's affairs. The choice was related to the models

we are attempting to validate. Tasks 1 and 3, in that they call for writing in which values and attitudes towards people and events emerge, might be expected to bear on the moral/affective dimensions, tasks 2 and 4 to bear on the cognitive/stylistic dimensions particularly.

For reasons of space it is not possible to demonstrate fully here how far the models apply to specimens of all four modes at all three age levels. We shall therefore confine our discussion to the autobiographical narrative, and the explicatory tasks.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NARRATIVE

Donna (7)

> The happiest day of my life.
>
> One day I was Playing outside when I saw some boys and then they saw me and came up to me and called me names So I what in doors and when I whet out again they were Playing with a tyre and this Man had a new garig down the road and one of the boys rod the tyre down to the other boy but he mercd it and it what right into the garig and the man told them off and then They whet home and when they whet to sunday school when they got home a Pliceman was theirand he told them off

Style

The organisation is of a series of events often linked individually but not as a totality. Significant and insignificant items are chronicled. The syntax is mainly simple sentences. In terms of verbal competence the generality of reference ('some boys', 'the man') illustrates at once the concreteness and impreciseness of much writing at this stage. Cohesive devices like and, but and so are used in an additive way. The reader is taken into account in that the orientation is clear - the motivation for the girl going in doors and for the garage owner's anger is clear. The appropriate language is apparent at the beginning where the written mode is employed (One day ...) but the style then becomes mainly oral. In terms of overall effectiveness the experience is imperfectly

realised partly because of the inadequate command of the stylistic devices.

Affective

The piece expresses no feelings of the self despite the title there is no 'happiness' in it; and there is little empathy for the other characters in the story. They are described from outside and what they say, think or feel is scarcely conveyed. There is some awareness of audience in the sense that adequate information is presented. But an imperfect grasp on reality is maintained, because (one suspects) the incident is manufactured rather than being a real or imaginatively real one.

Moral

The moral thinking is at an early level. The boys have done wrong and are thus punished by telling off, both by the garage owner and by a policeman, who represents the rule based nature of society. What the writer has not yet realised is the distinction between an intentional wrong, and an accidental one - neither boy presumably intended that the tyre should trundle into the garage, and it seems unnecessarily punitive to involve the police in this incident.

Cognitive

Simple reporting of an early kind, labelling rather than naming people. She holds the temporal sequence at first but later the temporal markers deteriorate - did the incident occur on Sunday, did the policeman visit them on that day?

Francesca (10)

The happiest day of my life

The happiest day of my life was on a Sunday when we had to go out. I don't know were the place was I don't know what it was called. It was by a little stream, and there were trees growing we could climb to trees some were very high. There were rocks too with grasses growing on top. A hill which had a path leading a long side the stream. You could climb up and down the hill it was a rocky hill. But it had lot of trees to catch hold of to pull your self up. It was a long walk along the stream we walked about a quater of the way and

quater of the way was about two miles. We got tired so we thought we should turn back there was a small water fall in the river. Because of some stones stuck in the middle of the stream there were bushes you could hide under, they were very big not many people walked on the path, there was another path on the other side of the stream. There were trees coving the path, but alot of light still came in. Then we got back we had to go home because the day was over.

Stylistic

The organisation is loose but not uncontrolled, based on a leisurely chronological pattern. Apart from the opening sentence (expected under the circumstances) there is no overview; the day begins, proceeds, and ends. There are signs of ability to use the syntax for particular effects (e.g. the parallelism of 'I don't know where the place was; I don't know what it was called'). Verbal competence is represented in the exactness of detail ('there were trees covering the path, but a lot of light still came in'). Appropriateness of language is developing in the sense of a literary style; particularly she has discovered repetition ('a quarter of the way') as a cohesive device. Orientation to audience is clear; care is taken to display the context, to explain (for instance the reason for the small waterfall). The general effectiveness arises from the detailing of an obviously 'genuine' experience, though clearly the ordering of details is slightly haphazard and unselective.

Affective

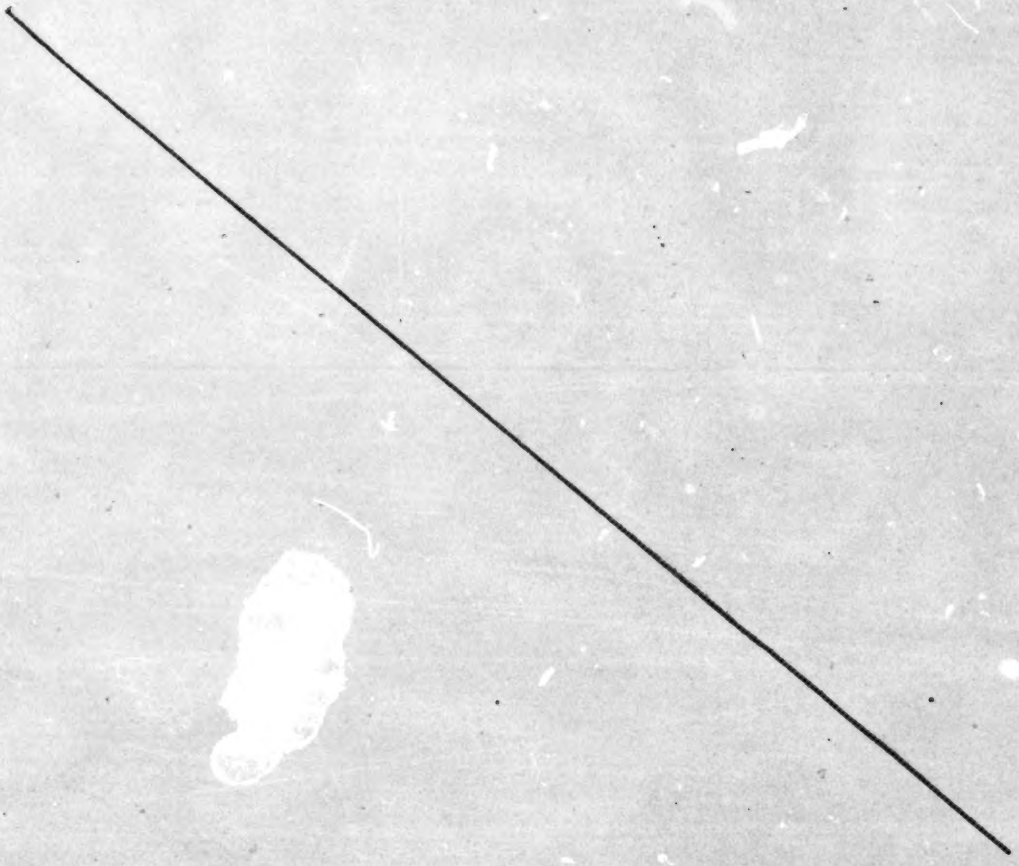
The experience essentially concerns self, though 'we' rather than 'I' is the pronoun used. Francesca states her feelings of tiredness, and there is implied a discussion with the others as to when they should turn back. She notes that the wood is empty of other people. Most noticeable on an affective measure is her response to the environment; it is described in careful terms and obviously enjoyed ('the bushes you could hide under' for example). This setting of the scene, and the various explanations shows an awareness of the needs of audience who cannot be expected to know the context. There is a sense of reality about the incident and its setting.

Cognitive

Basically a spatially organised reporting of the details of a place, within a simple overall chronology "On a Sunday we had to go out" "Then we got back. we had to go home because the day was over" She labels, because as she tells us "I don't know where the place was ...", yet goes on to describe the whereaboutsof geographical features such as rocks and trees in some details. She does offer explanations within this "there was a small waterfall in the river because of some stones stuck in the middle of the stream". A good example of describer-thinking, organised spatially.

Moral

Moral judgements do not apply particularly to this piece.



Colin (13)

In 1971 I went for a holiday to Italy with the rest of my family. We went to Rimini (on the Adriatic coastline) and stayed at a small hotel called the Susie my birthday is in June and that year we had our holiday early. (last week of May 1st week of June) I was 5 then (nearly 6) and was passing through the phase in which I "hated the Jerries" I often critised them calling them "Stupid Idiots". I say I was passing through this stage in fact I had only been attacking the Germans for 6 months or so, this phase would generally have lasted several years. At the age of 5 I couldn't swim a stroke (I learnt to swim at 9 or :0) however Mum and Dad had no qualm's about be going of because the beech (a lovely golden sand) was a gently shelving one. At the time I had a small (one place) inflatable boat and padle, this was my cheif joy, I would paddle around with it for an hour. The boat was a fairly stable one. About two days after I had been given the boat I was gently paddling it out toward the sea. the water looked shallow so I put my leg over the side of the inflatable and felt for the bottom The inflatable capsized and slowly floated away from me. My head bobbed up and down and I saw the boat 3 ft away but I just couldn't swim even that far I lifted my head above the water and tried to shout for help, however it sounded more like "Hel", and as my head sank below the waves then my head was clear again and I shouted "He" (the rest was stopped as I swallowed a mouthful of water) then my foot touched the bottom, the water was less than 4-5 ft deep! this time I didn't rise to the surface on my own. (I would have drowned there and then) A large broad shouldered man picked me out of the water with one hand and pulled in the inflatable with the other, after querring wether it was mine (by pointing to it and me and lifting an eyebrow). he then found my parents put me down and conversed with my Mother at some length in a foreign language. The Language he spoke was German. from that day I

have never attacked "the Jerries".

Stylistic

The organisation of this piece is good. Past is related to present experience. The details are relevant, and though one may predict the ending it is held back and used suitably. The beginning is immediate and economical. The syntax is controlled, sentences varying according to semantic needs (he seems to have recently discovered brackets as a device and really celebrates this). Verbal competence is indicated in the width of vocabulary, the exactness of description, the absence of unnecessary detail for the most part. He is in possession of a range of cohesive devices ('I say I was passing through this phase' 'about two days after'). Sensitivity to audience is perhaps over obvious - the amount of information in brackets to ensure that the reader is in the picture could have been dealt with in other ways, but otherwise there is good reader/writer contact. The piece is very effective because the experience is so well realised in terms of what was felt, said and done.

Affective

In this context the piece is of great interest. In terms of self it displays a recognition of the writer's own racial attitude, which he can distance as a phase. Then, as a result of his experience he comes to value others, in this case the German. There is a move outward from an egocentrical position to another oriented one. His observation of the German's sign conversation to discuss the ownership of the inflatable (by pointing to it and me and lifting an eyebrow'). is shrewd and appreciative. A normal device for realising others in composition is by giving their words. Here the writer cannot do this, but gives the equivalent. There is consciousness of environment, with sufficient but not excessive detail. There is consciousness of a reader (we have already mentioned the parenthetical device). Fantasy moves to reality - the stereotype ('stupid idiots') disappears when he actually meets the human being.

Moral

The moral thinking is quite advanced. He can recall being at an earlier level

where one judged Germans as stereotyped, attributing unfavourable attitudes to a whole race. He is able to distance that earlier attitude, and as a result of his experience see through the blinkers to the intentions and motives of the man who saved his life.

Cognitive

This is an elaborated narrative, in which explanations are offered for the incidents being developed. Beyond the incidental explanations are statements like 'I was passing through a phase' which represent a higher level of thinking, what one would call reflecting - generalising with reference to external rules and principles.

EXPLANATORY

Since the stylistic, affective and moral models have been applied in some detail to the biographical narrative writing for reasons of economy they will not be used again in this section, though the stylistic model would throw considerable illumination on the texts. The affective and moral models have little relevance to the 'How to play' tasks in the ways the pupils wrote them, but the cognitive model would seem to be very useful. We choose to discuss three compositions on the playing of football, but the range of topics was very varied - hopscotch and Monopoly for example.

Don (7)

football

first you pick the players Then One of players gos in goal and you score against him

Don gives us two well formed sentences, but they obviously contain only partial information. Such matters as rules, and the sense of context are absent. The structure is chronological as one would expect, and the viewpoint egocentric. However technical vocabulary (players, goal, score) is accurately used. The cognition is operating incompletely at describing level.

Andrew (10)

My favourite Game is football. It is well none all over the world. It is not Just a kids Geme It is a Gown up Game to. there are lots and lots of teams in Britain. There is Liverpool and Exeter City and York City and West Ham United and Many more team these team meat up and Play against each over it. Ends like 3 v 1 and things like that. This is now you play. You have a field and up each end of the pitch you have a goal. And the field has lines. thing you got to do is score in the goals. I mean you have to kick a ball in the Net and Goal keeper got to you from doing this. You elevan Players on each side if you are playing Proffesinlll. And III Tell you the Rules. If the ball goes off the pitch it is a throwing. And if you kick some man you have a three kick. But you kick some in the Penelty. And if you handell it you do same. I'll tell you the Bisians theres a Goal keeper and Theres Defenders, midfielders, Strikers, Wingers, Right Back, Left Back, and Theres more to and that how you play football. and if you practtise you may play for a proffeinel, one day.

Andrew starts with a concrete personal statement, and then goes on to a generalisation, 'It is well known all over the world' but it is not a generalisation of particular relevance to the explanation of the game. He casts about, not sure which details to select. This indeed is one of his difficulties when he comes to the task proper. He specifies rules, but not comprehensively. His organisation is partly chronological, partly spatial ('You have a field and up each end of the pitch you have a goal') though the two aspects are not well articulated. Lists of items (English teams and the names of positions) bulk out the piece. He goes far beyond Don, but his thinking is still in the describing category.

Alan (13)

Alan writes a four page piece which has an overview, an introduction

spatial markers in terms of a detailed plan of the pitch with measurements inserted, the main rules, and a list of basic skills. The piece is far too long to quote in full, so we will attempt to give some description by means of selective quotation.

The opening sentence goes straight to the aims of the game at the level of an overall evaluation.

The object of this game is to score in the opponent's goal.

Sets of rules follow about umpires, size of equipment and layout of the field. A drawing provided of the pitch presents 'a typical line up'. The main rules are then given, under sub-headings.

Offside is when a player has got one or no players in front of him when he is in the other half.

Penalties for fouls are given.

In part two Basic Skills are listed - control, shooting, heading, with an introduction.

I think that the most important skills are passing the ball from A to B, control it when the ball comes to you and heading the ball when it comes at head hight or if you want to dive for it.

Arising out of the material is a general conclusion.

Football is a popular game in Britain and has got a league containing 92 teams in four divisions.

The piece operates at the level of generalisation. It provides complete information. Its organisation is classificatory using abstractions as headings, and demonstrates a much higher level of cognition than either of the other two pieces.

DEVELOPMENT IN THE BIOGRAPHICAL-NARRATIVE AND EXPLANATORY MODES

The passages quoted above seem to us to display some of the characteristics of the age range of their writers. They are quoted as examples only. One cannot generalise from them, nor indeed from the work of all three classes which we analysed. In what follows, where we have in mind also this larger sample of

work, this limitation must be borne in mind.

Stylistically children of about seven may write short compositions with an additive structure, often incomplete, though their experience of stories will often give them a traditional opening like ' once upon a time'. Their organisation will be chronological, and will often conclude 'And then I went to bed', but they will often omit locational markers. Cohesive devices will perhaps be confined to and, so, then. The mode will be spoken rather than written.

In the affective mode the seven year olds do not usually express their feelings explicitly, though the reader may infer some emotional states from the selection of the material from the stories. They are often egocentrical, though he or she may be used instead of I. They may have insufficient control of language to realise to the reader what they wish to say. If they write stories involving other people the characters may well be distanced and general as in the piece by Donna.

At the age of ten children may write coherent compositions still on a temporal principle, with more audience awareness and thus orientation elements. With their growing command some of them will have become fond of details, used insufficiently selectively. A variety of openings and conclusions may be observed. They may write with more confidence, in the first person cohesive devices, such as a more confident use of pronouns instead of repeated nouns, are often used. Audience awareness is greater, as represented by orientation devices.

The ten year old writer may express more feeling, but does not show a high level of awareness of his feelings. However they are able to assess the general dispositions of other people, and to some extent represent this in the words they give them to speak. Such writers are also able to choose aspects of their environment for their significance in stimulating emotional impulse, though as yet of a shallow kind, and move easily into a fantasy land of wish fulfilment.

The thirteen year olds have often developed significantly stylistically, being able to organise their writing by a deliberate though not necessarily conscious pre-planning. Structure does not need to be chronological; they can insert flashbacks or glances forward. Syntax can be subordinated to semantics. Verbal competence will have increased, partly because the sense of the various connotations of an individual word in different contexts has increased. Cohesive devices are more

sophisticated.

In the affective mode thirteen year olds studied showed a marked development over the ten year olds. Many show an awareness of the complexity of emotions in themselves and an empathy with the feelings of others, often manifested by an ability to characterise them in terms of their speech and actions. In addition the writers are beginning to show an ability to select environmental factors, both social and physical, that are significant in the stimulation of the emotion. Perhaps most interesting of all, however, they are beginning to use writing as an opportunity to know their own feelings, and to come to terms with both the world of reality and the world of the imagination. Once having encapsulated these worlds in story as a form of self-expression they should be able to grow emotionally, having added to the development of their affective complexes; that is, to develop their understanding of the feeling aspect of living.

According to the cognitive model we have devised two dimensions of development emerge in the pieces analysed. One is the amount of information children can handle - from a partial account, which is descriptive, to full details with, in these tasks, explanation of the rule system. The other is the capacity for objectivity. Younger children may put themselves in the game and see it from a narrow viewpoint - e.g. as goal scorer. The older writer stands back, takes a more comprehensive view, including generalisation and underlying explanations for performance. That is they see a game as a system, rather than as an instance of spontaneous behaviour.

COMMENT

This paper gives a description of work in progress. The models offered are not necessarily in their final form, and certainly not in the degree of detail which they ought to reach if they are to be exact instruments. Under the circumstances only tentative remarks can be made, particularly as the sample is small.

However from our work we may offer the following comments.

It does seem possible to analyse the written work of pupil's in a more objective way than has hitherto been thought possible. So often one hears comments to the effect that judgement is a purely idiosyncratic matter. Objectivity has however to be defined multidimensionally - the exclusive focus on a narrow range of skills such as spelling and punctuation can do nothing but harm.

It would seem likely that many teachers are in fact using such a multi-dimensional model intuitively, equally that many others are not. The production of a category system is not intended to replace the teachers experience by a machine, but to increase awareness of the bases of judgement.

To talk about 'stages' of growth is premature, and may be mistaken. However our work suggests that there are features which occur with older children and not with younger, essentially related to the learner's psychology which mean that we can have proper expectations of 'development' with children within a broadly ranging age band. It is sometimes suggested that young children cannot handle 'transactional writing'. Judging by the response of some seven year olds to our transactional tasks, this may be because they are not asked.

Although linguistic tasks are specific to situations, and a writer may perform badly on one and well on another, on the evidence we have here it does seem that over a series of tasks expectations aroused in one will be fulfilled in at least some of the others. This matter however awaits further investigation.

As far as 'maturity' is concerned it does seem possible to offer some definition which is not merely subjective, but lies within the learner's psychology. This is not to say that it is not a cultural matter - obviously 'maturity' is a cultural concept. In terms of moral and cognitive development a good deal of

research is at hand; in terms of affective and stylistic very little, so that the models offered here are very tentative. It is hoped that all four models will be found useful, if only to provoke d'sagreement.

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